

A Parent's Quick Reference Card

Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement

This quick reference guide provides common warning signs of gang involvement, but may not be all-encompassing. Parents should look for multiple signs to indicate possible gang involvement because some of these indicators alone, such as clothes or musical preferences, are also common among youth not involved in gangs. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with local gang symbols, seek help early, and consider contacting school personnel, local law enforcement, faith leaders, and community organizations for additional assistance.

Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved with a Gang

- Admits to "hanging out" with kids in gangs
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies, or websites
- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on school books, clothes, walls, or tattoos
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hand/knuckles)
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
- Carries a weapon
- Has been in trouble with the police
- Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:
 - Withdrawing from family
 - Declining school attendance, performance, behavior
 - Staying out late without reason
 - Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
 - Exhibiting signs of drug use
 - Breaking rules consistently
 - Speaking in gang-style slang

El Paso Police Department

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